

REVIEW

OF

TRACT NO. 171:

ON

“THE NATURE AND BENEFITS OF HOLY BAPTISM.”

“PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL TRACT SOCIETY.”

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W.M. S. YOUNG, Printer.

REVIEW OF TRACT NO. 171.

ALTHOUGH the publication of this tract bears the date of 1844, it has but very recently come under our observation. A few days since, a copy of it was sent to us through the post office, and under circumstances which seemed to require our careful consideration of its contents. We have read it repeatedly, and each perusal has but deepened our regret at its circulation, and diminished our confidence in the society under whose sanction it has been issued. Who the author may be, we do not even surmise, nor do we desire to know. Our concern is with the teaching of the tract. This we purpose exhibiting in its own language in connexion with the several points which it professes to teach; and we shall express freely our decided protest against the serious errors with which we think it abounds.

“The general position” taken by the writer is thus stated—“In the human nature of our Lord and Saviour, mankind is generically new-born”—p. 4. In connexion with and explanatory of this general proposition, we have the following passages—“The Son of God, thus coming into human nature, as a new and sanctifying root and representative of it, has sanctified it altogether.”—p. 8. “Did not Christ redeem human nature altogether? and if so, must he not have redeemed it from its very roots and beginnings?”—p. 10. “Did not the Son of God, as he became a man, begin even as others by being a little infant: and if his manhood has consecrated the manhood of his brethren, why should we doubt that his childhood too has consecrated their childhood, his infancy their infancy?”—p. 10. The writer quotes and adopts the language of Neander on St. Irenæus—“Christ,” says Neander, “by means of that divine life which he communicated to human nature, and revealed in it, has sanctified that human nature from the very first seed of its development,”—p. 11.

If humanity is thus, by the mere fact of its adoption by the Son of God, new-born in the lump, “sanctified altogether from its very roots and beginnings,” where is there time or place for the existence of “original or birth sin,” as set forth in the ninth article? That

the writer does not *intend* to deny this doctrine, we gather from other parts of the tract; but how it can stand with such expressions as those quoted, we cannot conceive. To our mind the theory of the tract upon this point seems to be, that in their very conception mankind are universally sanctified, and thus the corruption which would otherwise have been inherited by every one, that is "naturally engendered by the offspring of Adam," is in fact prevented. If this idea is not conveyed by the phrase which affirms "the sanctification of human nature from the very first seeds of its development," I should be at a loss for words by which it could be expressed. From Neander, such language does not surprise us. Any one who has glanced into his "History of the Planting and Training of the Christian Church," must have noticed the unhallowed liberties which he takes with the Sacred Text, and the unhesitating manner in which he substitutes his own rationalistic speculations for the obvious teaching of the inspired volume. But from an approved writer of the Protestant Episcopal Tract Society, we have a right to expect, not only that he will eschew the wanton imaginings of Neology, but also carefully avoid those forms of speech which savour of such unsound teaching. These, I need not say, have no sanction from Scripture, and find no countenance from the standards of the church. Their effect is to perplex and mislead many readers, and to lay others under the disagreeable necessity of exposing and counteracting such suspicious innovations on established Christian phraseology. Whatever may be the precise meaning of the writer when he speaks of the generic sanctification of human nature in the very first seeds of its development, it is certain that to excuse the language, some farther explanation is needed than the text affords.

The saying of St. Irenæus, quoted and adopted by the writer of the tract, that "our Lord therefore passed through every age, and was made an infant for infants, sanctifying infants: a little child, for children, sanctifying their age—a youth, for youths, being made an example to such, and sanctifying them to the Lord," partakes more of fancy than of fact. It is not strictly true that our Lord *passed through every age*. He was cut off in the prime of life: and on this imaginary theory, made no provision for those who survive the meridian—who attain to old age. But the serious objection to this theory is, that it has no foundation in the word of God, and tends to substitute a mere poetic fiction, for the true procuring and efficient cause of sanctification. It is not by the mere fact that the

Son of God assumed human nature and passed in an exemplary manner, the several stages of life—that infants, children, and men are sanctified. This blessed effect, when experienced, is to be referred to the efficacy of the blood-shedding or death of the Son of God, and to the operation of his Spirit, generally in connexion with the due use of the means which have been ordained for this end. Any representation which diverts the mind from this only arrangement for our sanctification, is false and mischievous.

REGENERATION. On this point the language of the tract is as follows—"a gift of the Spirit," p. 4, "an indwelling of the Spirit," p. 4, "an abiding presence,"—"a continued inhabitation of the Spirit," p. 7, "a new heavenly manhood," p. 9, "the conferring on man a spiritual constitution with spiritual faculties and powers, which he could never have inherited by his first birth, and whereby he can apprehend heavenly truth, and discern, obey, and love the spiritual law," p. 14, "overcome all sin and grow up to perfect holiness," p. 15.

It is very important to keep in view the distinction between spiritual regeneration, or the new birth, and sanctification, or the development and progress of the divine life in the soul. The inception of that life is the new birth, and is the effect of the operation of the Holy Ghost. In those thus born there is a growth in grace produced by the abiding presence of the same Spirit. We conceive therefore that the expressions "inhabitation," "indwelling of the Spirit," are not proper to indicate the new birth itself, but, strictly speaking, denote the state and privilege of those who, having been born of God, increase in those things which pertain to life and godliness. In the phraseology of the tract, therefore, there is, if nothing more, a want of precision, which is calculated to create confusion, and is inexcusable in a writer professing to set forth a doctrine with systematic accuracy, and clear it from misconceptions with which, he supposes, it has been associated.

When the writer speaks of a person as receiving in regeneration "*spiritual faculties*,"—"faculties which he could never have inherited by his first birth"—we consider the statement as unguarded, if not erroneous. What *new* faculties has a regenerated person? What *faculty* which he did not possess before, and which is not common to human nature? The faculties which he had before are indeed freed from the bondage of corruption, and relieved from the prevailing disabilities and degradation of sin, but no *new faculty* is received. If there be, we are interested to learn its name, and

to be informed as to its peculiar operation. The understanding is *enlightened*, the will is *renewed*. But the person had both understanding and will before—these he “inherited by his first birth.” He has now a spiritual discernment which he did not possess previously—but this is not a *faculty*. Indeed, if new faculties must be superadded to those of our natural constitution, “to enable a man to apprehend heavenly truth, and to discern, obey, and love the spiritual law,” how is he more culpable for his ignorance and disobedience, than if he had been *born an idiot?* The language of the tract may be used by the natural man in excuse for his delinquencies, and will furnish him at least as good ground for asking “why then doth God find fault?” as the most ultra Calvinism. But it is not the *want of faculties* for the discernment of truth, and for obedience, that forms the lamentable condition of the unregenerate man. It is their perversion, and abuse, and consequent impotency. In the new birth, they are reclaimed from their degrading alienation, and recovered from their shameful incapacity; and from having been instruments of unrighteousness and sin, they are now cheerfully yielded as instruments of righteousness unto God.

But we are still farther at issue with the writer. He speaks of the person who is “born again” as one who “now can apprehend heavenly truth, and discern, obey, and love the spiritual law”—*can* do so—we object to this *mere potentiality* on the part of a renewed man—and affirm of such a one that he *does* apprehend—obey—and love, &c. These exercises may obtain in more or less clearness and strength—but obtain they certainly do in every person who is born of the Spirit, and their absence is conclusive proof that the great change has not been effected. Upon this point, how strikingly different from the diluted teaching of the text, is the language of St. John in his first general epistle—mark the contrast: “Whosoever *doeth* (not *can* do, but *doeth*) righteousness, is born of God”—“whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin (habitually,) for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.” The apostle does not say, who *can* refrain from sin, but who *does* so—and cannot do otherwise. And so in this verse, “Whosoever is born of God, sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.” Again—“Every one that loveth (not that *can* love, but that *loveth*,) is born of God”—“Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world—(not *can* overcome, but *overcometh*.) The writer of the tract, however, describes the new birth as a quiescent potentiality.

With a little alteration in the language of St. James, the apostle John would say to such a teacher—show me thy new birth *without working*, and I will show thee my new birth *working*. Unless it is actually accompanied by such exercises, it is not a *birth*, but *death*.

The tract proceeds—“But this great benefit of the second birth, the conferring on men a spiritual constitution with spiritual powers, is of no more avail to the recipient, unless he chooses to exercise that constitution, and put forth those powers, than would be the natural constitution and powers he receives from his birth, unless they were similarly exercised and put forth”—p. 14, that is, unless he chose to exercise and put them forth—very true; but for the writer’s purpose, a more unfortunate illustration could not well have been selected. What absurdity can be greater than to suppose one born into this world not choosing to exercise his natural powers? He exercises them as surely as he is born. He does so instinctively. It is part of his nature to do so. The writer himself sees this the next moment, and is therefore constrained to set aside his own “hypothetical case,” as he moderately styles it, by the following admission—“No man born into this breathing world ever failed to put forth some of the powers that he has in relation to that world.” “Born to the light and air, he has no inducement not to open his eyes to the one, and to inhale the other,” p. 14. Then, according to the writer’s theory, there is, on his own admission, no similitude in point of fact, but a real contrast. Still he maintains that the “hypothetical case,” of one’s being born and refusing to look or breathe, *can be supposed*. Yes, and so may any other unnatural absurdity *be supposed*, and if by so doing a theory can be proved, why every thing imaginable may be established as true. In this way, however, the writer glides on in his teaching. “But the case can be supposed (of one born into this world, who refuses to look or breathe,) and though he would thereby forego the benefits of his natural birth, the birth itself would still have taken place.” So “this is actually the case with numbers of us as regards our spiritual birth.” “Born into a spiritual world, with spiritual sunshine, and a spiritual atmosphere all around, we yet madly shut our eyes to the one, and refuse to breathe the other. But in this case, as in the other, the fact of birth remains unaffected,” p. 15. That is to say, if one is born in a way and condition in which no one ever was or will or can be born, yet inasmuch as he has been born, his birth has taken place. Exquisite logic! a perfect petitio! which we cannot gainsay. We must, however, take leave to remark that in the cases

supposed by the writer, the thing brought forth would be pronounced *still-born*, excepting only that even in the instance of still birth, there is no *refusal* to perform the functions of life. This is indeed an element or contingency of birth yet to be witnessed in the natural or spiritual world, found nowhere but in the monstrous hypothetical conception which has come to light in this tract. We repeat it, therefore, the writer is running a parallel where, on his theory, none exists, and establishing his conclusion by a similitude, where he concedes there is in reality only a contrast! But then this very opposition between his theory and illustration, is the very fact which renders that illustration appropriate in reference to the truths, with which his theory is also as entirely at variance. We therefore take his own language and exhibit the real analogy between nature and grace in this important process. "No man born into this breathing world *ever failed* to put forth some of the powers that he has in relation to that world." So no one born of the Spirit *ever failed* to put forth some of the powers that he has in relation to the spiritual world. It is the instinct of the new nature which he has received so to do. If any person never does, if any one "*refuses*," it is, as St. John teaches us, because he *is not born of God*. We understand with the apostle Paul that God "*works in us to will*." We are therefore credulous enough to hold with the church, that "*we have no power to do good works acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will*, and working with us when we have that good will," art. x. We are therefore in the habit of praying as taught in the collect for Tuesday in Easter week—"that as by thy special grace *preventing us, thou dost put into our minds good desires*, so by thy continual help, we may bring the same to good effect." In accordance with all this, we have supposed that an essential part of the process of spiritual regeneration consists in the *renewal of the will*; so much so that unless and until the man *actually chooses* that which is holy and good, he is not to be regarded as spiritually new-born. This is clearly the doctrine of St. John in the verses quoted from his first Epistle. The writer of the tract supposes, that a man may have received the power to overcome sin and grow up unto perfect holiness, but never choose to put it forth, and that then, though it even lies quiescent and useless, he is nevertheless to be considered born of God. Upon this point we prefer continuing in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship.

BAPTISM. We now proceed to notice the doctrine of the tract on the subject of baptism, and in our collection of passages on this point, some already quoted, will be found—for the theory of the writer permits him to use the same expressions and without qualification, both in reference to this ordinance and regeneration.

"Baptism is the ingrafting of our human nature on the human nature of our Lord. For the church is his mystical body," p. 13. "Baptism admits each individual man to this heavenly manhood," p. 9. "In baptism there is conferred on him a spiritual constitution, with spiritual faculties"—"and powers"—"which he could never have inherited by his first birth, and whereby he can apprehend heavenly truth, and discern, obey, and love the spiritual law," p. 14.

"Baptism means admission unto all spiritual blessings whatever," p. 12, 13.

"Baptism is to be considered as conveying to us the Holy Ghost," p. 14.

By baptism "he has had such a donation of the Spirit made over to him, as entitles him to count on the Spirit's aid, whenever he really wishes to do those good things, which he cannot do in his own strength," p. 17.

It will be perceived by a comparison of these passages with those quoted in connexion with regeneration, that the writer considers baptism and the new birth by the Spirit as identical—uses the expressions as perfectly convertible—knows no other regeneration but baptism—no other presence of the Spirit than that which is covenanted, conveyed, and received, in and by the administration of this ordinance.

The Theory of the Tract, at large. This we are now prepared to state by a selection, a combination of the writer's own phrases. It is, in his very words, then, as follows—The man Christ Jesus is himself the Regeneration of the human race. In his human nature mankind was generically new-born. Baptism admits the individual man to this new heavenly manhood, ingrafting his human nature on the human nature of our Lord. The person has now a spiritual constitution with spiritual faculties—faculties which he never could have inherited by his first birth, and whereby he can apprehend heavenly truths, and discern, obey, and love the spiritual law. The unclean spirit has gone out of him.* The Holy Ghost is conveyed

* Would it not be well for the next General Convention to prepare a form of exorcism?

to him. He is admitted to all spiritual blessings whatever. For claiming all Christian privileges, he needs no other warrant than his human nature. Only his own obstinate rejection of the boon can hinder his obtaining this new heavenly manhood in baptism. Whoever does not turn away from Christ and his grace, is regenerated thereby, ingrafted on Christ, and become a follower of Christ in the regeneration. If he but abide in him, he shall bear fruit through him. The living sap will reach to the very smallest branch that remains unsevered, either by outward abscission or inward obstructions from the stem or the root. It is obvious that all infants must be considered regenerate in the sacrament of baptism. They cannot hinder its due effect. They cannot refuse Christ or his grace. The only cause, therefore, that can render it inoperative in an adult, has no place in them: we can make them Christians by a second birth, can impart to them, in germ, that sacred gift, and though we *certainly* affirm the presence of grace in baptism, only in the case of infants who interpose no obstacle, yet even an adult receiving, through his impenitence and unbelief, but a dead form of baptism, must yet, if mercifully brought out of such a condition, look, not to certain vicissitudes of feeling, but to his baptism, as the epoch of his second birth.*

To some of the foregoing expressions, occurring in a different connexion from that in which we find them, and properly guarded, there could be no exception, because they are in themselves susceptible of an interpretation in accordance with the analogy of faith. But it has ever been one of the artifices of innovators to retain the terms commonly employed to convey truth, and yet insidiously associate with them the errors sought to be introduced. The vessels of the sanctuary are used, whilst their contents are essentially changed, and the unsuspecting recipient is beguiled to drink the pernicious mixtures of deceit for the pure water of life. To much of the language and teaching of this tract we are constrained to take decided exception, and deem it a duty to state our objections as distinctly as possible.

The assertion that by baptism, "our human nature is ingrafted on the human nature of our Lord," is, so far as we can see, without any real warrant from God's word. Perhaps the writer would point, in support of his statement, to Ephesians v. 30, 32. "For we are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones. I speak concerning Christ and his Church." It could, however, scarce-

* For this last extraordinary assertion, see p. 22 of the Tract, note.

ly be expected that this reference would avail any thing with those who had considered it in its connexion—who look to the *sense*, and are not lightly misled by the mere sound of a passage, evidently highly figurative. The words are used by the apostle in allusion to Adam's address to Eve. Formed, as she was, of a rib taken from his side during sleep, he regarded her as “bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh,” as part of himself, and therefore to be loved as himself. The peculiar circumstances of this transaction, we learn from the apostle, were intended to constitute it a mystery, a sacred sign, an emblem. It was designed to be emblematical of the relation of believers to Christ and of his love to them on that account. They are made what they are in virtue of the breaking of Christ's side when he was pierced for them. Taken, then, as it were from his side in the sleep of death—redeemed by his blood-shedding and quickened and sanctified by his Spirit so secured for them, they are most intimately related to him, as bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, and he loves them as himself—we find nothing here, however, to justify the assertion that “our human nature is ingrafted on the human nature of our Lord,” much less to authorize the assertion that such casual ingraftment is produced by baptism. The union of believers to Christ is indeed real and vital; yet it is not *fleshly*, but *spiritual*; formed, not by any mere outward transaction, but by the exercise of a living faith.

There is indeed an *ingraftment* effected by baptism not of “our human nature on the human nature of our Lord,” but an ingraftment “into the church.” The company of his professing people, who have been called by his gospel, associated under his laws, and observing his ordinances,—is, by a very common and well understood figure, denominated *a body*. Those who belong to this company are, in keeping with the figure, said to be “members one of another;” and as Christ is the acknowledged Lord of this company, the *head* of the *body*, it is *his body*—the body of Christ, and the members thereof are the members of his body—“members of Christ,” as it is expressed in the catechism. Now, washing with water into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, being the ordained mode of initiation into this society, persons so baptized become members of the same—members of the body of which Christ is the head; and therefore are said, by baptism, as an instrument, to be “grafted,” not in “their human nature on the human nature of our Lord,” but “grafted into the church.” This is the language of our 27th article, and it is scriptural in its cast and import.

But we quote again the words of the tract upon this point, in connexion with the sentence next ensuing, that we may note the extraordinary mode of reasoning adopted by the writer—"Baptism is an ingrafting of our human nature on the human nature of our Lord.—For the church is his mystical body," p. 13. What an argument to be seriously proposed to a Protestant reader! Because *the church* is the *mystical* body of Christ, therefore baptized persons are in their human nature grafted on the *human nature* of our Lord—that is, the *mystical* body, the church, is the human nature of our Lord; for if not, there is no meaning or even show of argument in the words quoted. The church the human nature of our Lord! an extravagance almost equal to the monstrosity produced by the Bishop of New Jersey in his charge of May 25th, 1845, in which we are informed that "Christ is the church, *is itself*"—of course the church is Christ, divine nature as well as human, for aught of limitation to the contrary in the charge. But the tract is more moderate and discriminating. It makes the church no more than "the human nature of our Lord." Shame! shame! upon such false, and might we not say blasphemous teaching? and shame upon the weak attempt to palm it upon the unobserving, by the artful interchange of terms, by no means convertible—as if the church and the human nature of our Lord were the same!

That the church, in a certain sense of that diversely significant word, is "the *mystical* body of Christ," is unquestionably true.—Hence in the prayer after the administration of the communion, we are taught to give thanks that those by whom it has been "duly received," are "very members incorporate in the *mystical* body of the Son of God." But what is that "*mystical* body?" The very next sentence is exegetical, and fully explains it. Not the "human nature of our Lord." No! "but the blessed company of all faithful people." These form that "*mystical* body." Other professors, who have *not* *duly received* the holy communion, though outwardly associated with them, are not members of the "*mystical* body." Hence the necessity of the distinction of the church as *visible* and *invisible*;—the first including all who are Christians by external profession, the second comprising those only who are Christians in truth and in deed, being united to Christ by a living faith, and in a holy life. Hence we read, art. 26th, "In the *visible* church the evil be ever mingled with the good, and sometimes the evil have chief authority in the ministration of the word

and sacraments." However the writer of the tract, with others of his school, may cavil at this distinction, he is constrained virtually to concede it—"There is," he says, "no distinction between the visible church and the invisible, farther than what consists in the presence of frailty and sin, even in the best members of the former, and the fact that many, not outwardly severed from her pale, may even now be so inwardly. The invisible church is but the genuine healthy visible, to be at last altogether purged and perfected," p. 13. The admission seems to be reluctantly made, and is defective.—But we receive it as we have it, recognising as it certainly does, the great principle on which the distinction of church visible and invisible is founded. It enables us to set forth in words few and plain, the truth for which we contend. All who receive baptism, are thereby admitted to the *visible* church—the Christian society at large—and as this company for reasons already assigned is called "the body of Christ," all baptized persons are, in this sense, members of his body—of Christ. But this ordinance *alone* does not introduce one into the *invisible* church. We are authorized to regard none as actually pertaining to it, but those who are united to Christ by a living, purifying, obedient faith, and who are evinced to be "saints" by "virtuous and godly living." These, according to the collect for All Saints' Day, are "the elect of God, knit together in one communion and fellowship, in the *mystical body* of his Son, Christ our Lord."

We cannot here refrain from the remark that it seems impossible to examine the writings of the Tractarians and their pupils, without being struck by their continually reaching after the inscrutable, and at the same time, morbidly craving something carnal, in the doctrine and institutions of the gospel—feigning mysteries, where God has made none—undervaluing and decrying the spiritual exercises of religion as "unreal." As if nothing were real which is not either unintelligible or else palpable and fleshly. Hence their system becomes one of material organization, and machine-like action, operated by a kind of priestly legerdemain accompanied by much of the dramatic. Human nature is generically regenerated in the human nature of our Lord and Saviour, on which it is ingrafted by baptism, and so vegetates by virtue of living sap flowing into it by reason of this insertion. It has only to abide in this position, avoiding abscission, interposing no obstacle to the flow of the diffusive sap, which is furthered and increased in its circulation by ordained human ministrations; and then, growth and facility is the inevitable consequence.

Christians, we know, are God's husbandry; but not after the fashion of this tract, for ingenious as its system may be, it has the mis-hap to be unscriptural, and therefore *unreal*. It may please men with the name and show of life,—it may give a factitious importance to the priesthood, especially when associated with the power of producing *impanation* in the other sacrament, and the denial to the laity of the right and duty of private judgment. But it is a system of pretence. It has not, what it promises to give, and is impotent to accomplish, what it professes to perform. The world witnessed its working, under another name, till it had overlaid, and, had it been possible, must have crushed the gospel—darkening, and degrading those over whom it established its demoralizing power. Through blood and death, and in Heaven's help, the wretched yoke was broken, and we look with alarm on every movement by which it may in any measure be replaced.

With regard to the doctrine of the Tract as to the ingraftment of our human nature by baptism on the human nature of Christ, and the assertion in the charge to which we have adverted, that Christ is the church—itself, let all this be considered for a moment in connexion with the teaching of the same school in reference to the other sacrament, viz. that the natural body and blood of Christ are somehow mysteriously present in and under the elements, and to what a horrible conclusion are we brought—Christ—the church itself, eating Christ! He feeding on himself! An absurdity of cannibalism of which we loathe even to write—yet to be taken for truth, if this preposterous system is to be received.

If it were allowable to be amused by the perplexities in which the erroneous teaching of the tract involves the writer, and the shifting which he practises to relieve himself from obvious inconsistencies with scripture and the standards of the Church, a smile might be provoked by the statement (pp. 8—9) compared with the note at the bottom of the latter page, “man needs no other warrant for claiming all Christian privileges, than his human nature, since human nature is that which Christ has redeemed and hallowed.” According to this statement, *any man* may claim baptism, all that a minister should require is that the applicant be a man—a human being—no *personal qualification* should be insisted on. Simply as a partaker of that “human nature which Christ has redeemed and hallowed,” he may demand “the great sign of redeemed humanity,” and who dare forbid? But from the beginning different ground has been taken, and on high authority—“*Repent*

and be baptized," was the injunction of St. Peter, on the day of Pentecost. "If thou "*believest with all thine heart*," said Philip to the Ethiopian, "thou mayest be baptized"—and this was in perfect harmony with the commission which Christ gave to his apostles: "He that *believeth* and is baptized, shall be saved." Hence, the church insists on these requisites in those adults who apply for baptism; and even in the case of infants, does not permit their reception, till promises to this effect are solemnly made in their name; which promises they, when they come to the years of discretion, are bound to perform—and if not performed, no actual interest in covenanted blessing is acquired. The writer of the tract sees—he could not but see—the incompatibility of this demand with his warrant in virtue of a naked participation of human nature, and therefore, in a note, he labours to protect himself against the charge to which the statement in the text has rendered him liable. "This" (statement) he tells us, "does not involve a denial of much peculiar preparation being necessary on the part of adults, before they can be admitted to baptism." But we maintain that if there be meaning in words, it does involve such a denial. To say a man "*needs no other warrant* for claiming all Christian privileges," than his human nature, and then in the next breath, to insist on "much peculiar preparation *before* he can be admitted to baptism," is obviously to deny the sufficiency of what had been affirmed to be the *only* needed warrant. To say—that to be a human being, is enough to entitle one to my charity, and then to add, nevertheless there must be a great deal of peculiar preparation before any one can be admitted to share my sympathy and benevolence, would, by most persons, be regarded as contradictory. To this, the statement in the tract is perfectly analogous, and as palpably absurd. We are however happy to find that, in despite of his system, the writer admits that there are important prerequisites to baptism. But mark the loose and inaccurate language which follows—"as men, as *human beings*, they become candidates."—A *candidate*, according to Dr. Johnson, is one who "solicits, or proposes himself for something of advancement." Are men, "as men"—"as human beings," solicitors for baptism? Do they, in this state, propose themselves for the advancement signified by this ordinance? Our writer being the witness, "numbers madly refuse to avail themselves of these privileges," even after, without their solicitation, baptism has been administered. What then does he mean by their being *candidates* for that which they do not personally solicit, and the bene-

fits of which they despise and repudiate? If all he intends is that they need baptism and the blessings of which it is the sign—this is another thing, and is most inaptly expressed—indeed, not expressed at all, by the words in the tract. But let us read on, and see the singular passage in its completeness: “*As men, as human beings, they become candidates—by a tried, penitent, and obedient temper, they prove that they themselves enter into this (what?)—that they see how manhood has been redeemed and made holy, and that they themselves wish for this manhood—that they will cleave to it, and cherish it, if we admit them to the appointed initiation—the birth into it; and therefore after such trial, we do admit them.*” Why herein is a marvellous thing! a requirement that a man should be born before his birth! Let us see. We are told, p. 14, that in baptism there is conferred on the individual “a spiritual constitution with spiritual faculties, whereby he can apprehend heavenly truth, and discern, obey, and love the spiritual law.” This is the new birth, in and by baptism—of course never received before. Yet here, in the note, p. 9, we are taught that before an adult can be admitted to baptism, he must possess a *penitent* and *believing* temper, and so prove that he will cleave to, and cherish this true manhood, if we admit him to the birth into it. Now, it is a simple question—did a man ever, can he, truly repent and sincerely believe and give credible proof that he will continue in the same, without possessing faculties whereby he can apprehend heavenly truth, discern, obey, and love the spiritual law? If not—then certainly he must possess those faculties in order to becoming qualified for baptism. But according to the tract, the reception of those faculties is the birth of the Spirit, which, therefore, must have passed upon him, before he became spiritually regenerated by baptism, that is, he must have been born before his birth—have had and experienced the faculties of regeneration before he was regenerated, and in order to qualify him for, and entitle him to be regenerated. Ay, the man must not only have been born before his birth, but a little better born before than afterwards—for in baptismal regeneration, according to the tract, he only receives faculties and powers, which are of no avail, unless he “chooses” to exercise them—a contingent benefit. But before baptism, he must, according to the tract, give proof that he both *possesses* and *uses* such powers in repentance and faith, and *will cleave to, and cherish* the same—and this is something beyond the writer’s account of baptismal birth.

We now proceed to notice the doctrine of the tract in reference to the *baptism of infants*. What is the fact, and what may be expected here? According to the writer, "It is obvious that all infants must be considered regenerate in the sacrament of baptism. They cannot hinder its due effect. They cannot refuse Christ or his grace. The only cause, therefore, that can render it inoperative in an adult, has no place in them. We can make them Christians by a second birth—give them in germ that sacred gift."—As their human nature, then, is thus ingrafted on Christ, they are of course pervaded by that "living sap," "which will reach to the smallest branch." And as they "remain unanswered either by outward abscission or inward obstruction, (for being infants, neither of these can occur,) they must gradually vegetate in healthful state, up to the moment of accountability, and then, as nothing has obstructed "the living sap," we may expect, invariably, at least the development of a beautiful spiritual bud. What, on this theory, is there to prevent it? The opening bud may be blighted, but up to the period of expansion, "there was nothing to render the spiritual sap inoperative," it must therefore certainly grow, and swell, and unfold in blessed blossom. But is this *invariably* the case, as it should be on this theory? No reply is needed. We have the answer in melancholy facts which are obvious to every eye, and require no comment. We have asked if this be *invariably* the case; for that instances of such happy expansion of infant powers do occur, we are free to grant: we are far from holding with those who deny the possibility of infant regeneration. That which constitutes the inception, and contains the elements of the life of God in the soul, may, we believe, take place *in baptism*, or *before* or *after baptism*.* To deny this possibility would, we conceive, involve a principle leading legitimately to the denial of original sin. So far, we cordially agree with the writer of the tract. But then we maintain that where this is effected, it will inevitably appear in the development of the faculties of the child. As they unfold, they will, more or less manifestly, open under the influence of grace. And as this is not *invariably* the case with those baptized in infancy, no mode of reasoning with which we are acquainted, and no

* With regard to those baptized in infancy, so far as our observation extends, their spiritual regeneration, when experienced, has been effected, in most instances, after "they have come to years of discretion," through the instrumentality of the word, effectually applied by the agency of the Holy Ghost; so that they may say, "Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth," James i. 18.

authority of scripture of which we are aware, justify us in concluding that all persons so baptized are, in the writer's sense of the phrase, *spiritually regenerated*.

On the great evils of this wretched system we need not dwell. They have been often and well exhibited. The tendency of the whole theory is subversive of the gospel plan of salvation. It leads a man to regard that great spiritual change, which is essential to his attainment of heaven, as infallibly associated with an administration which furnishes no such evidence, and thus may involve him in fatal error. It encourages him to cleave to this error, though his whole course has been in practical contradiction of the delusive assumption. Hear the author of the tract. "I may take this opportunity of observing that even an adult, receiving through his impenitence and unbelief nothing but a dead form of baptism, must yet, if mercifully brought out of such a condition, look, not to certain vicissitudes of feeling, but to his baptism as the epoch of his second birth," p. 22, note. In defiance, then, of the habitually prevailing power of a sensual nature and of a reprobate life, a man who has been baptized should conclude that he is spiritually regenerate, and has been so ever since the ordinance was administered! What consolation this assurance would have afforded to Simon Magus! Evidently it did not occur to the mind of the apostle, or his address to that unhappy man would have been vastly different from the one on record.

We have reserved for the close of our remarks,* a monstrous opinion which meets us at the very commencement of the tract. The writer informs us that "one great misconception on the subject of regeneration has been, the supposing it a grace known to the sons of men before the gospel dispensation." That it was so known he repeatedly denies. He quotes as follows from Neander,

* We have, by no means, animadverted on all that we deem exceptionable in the teaching of the tract, though enough has been noted to expose its pernicious tendency. We had intended to offer a few remarks on "the beautiful poems" which are appended "to illustrate and recommend the views" which the writer "has been trying to exhibit." We must, however, let them pass without comment, for what they may be worth. If more of the same sort should be needed, we advise the writer to inquire for a beautiful poem of western origin and use, composed with a reference to Campbellism, with which, judging from a recent editorial in The Church Times, this system closely symbolizes. The poem alluded to may be identified by the chorus to each stanza—

"For every mother's son and daughter,
Here's salvation in the water."

on a passage in the gospel of St. John: "The Messiah himself declared that it was only after he should have ascended into heaven, that the glorified Son of man would be able to bestow the baptism of the Spirit in its divine and invisible efficacy." This quotation is commended as follows: "It has been given him (Neander) to see a principle lying close to the roots of baptismal regeneration, that is, that regeneration itself is a benefit so peculiar to the Christian covenant as not to have been enjoyed, even by the apostles, during their Lord's sojourn upon earth," p. 5, note. Again, he says—"There had never been a birth of the Spirit." "The effects of the fall had not yet been recovered (removed?)—man, even when in some measure accepted by his Maker, was still an outcast from Eden, still exiled from the eternal home and family of the blessed. The fallen root was not yet taken away; the spiritual man was not yet revealed—the spiritual constitution not yet provided,"—p. 7. We have been liberal in our quotations, that it may be clearly seen that we do not misapprehend the views of the writer. If he merely meant that the New Testament dispensation was eminently distinguished by the fulness of its privileges—that, for example, the light of divine truth *now* shines with more intensity and diffusiveness—that the grace of God is now more abundant and more extended in its application—that what saints of old saw in shadow, we see in substance—that what, in many particulars, was given to them in promise, we see performed, and that therefore our advantages are vastly superior to those generally experienced anterior to the Christian era—all this would be true. It, and no more, is proved by the passages on which he relies to sustain his exaggerated statement. But the writer contends for something more, different "*in kind.*" He insists that the Spirit had never been "*given*"—that there had never been *a birth of the Spirit* before the day of Pentecost.

The statement of this extravagant opinion will suggest its refutation to all who are familiar with the word of God. The language of our Lord will readily occur—"How much more will your Heavenly Father *give* his Holy Spirit to those who ask him?" "He that asketh, receiveth."* Again, the prayer of David which

* And then in his address to Nicodemus—"Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?" Can words more clearly teach that "these things" were already and generally known, so much so that the ignorance of Nicodemus was a reproach to him? And what was the subject of our Saviour's discourse? On the admission of the author of the tract, it was this very subject of "regeneration," p. 4. Either, therefore, this regeneration was then no new thing, or the

was embodied in the public worship of the Jews, as it is in our own liturgy, will also be remembered: "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me." He certainly supposed the Holy Spirit was *given*, for how can that be "taken away" which has not yet been bestowed. Again, "Create a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." From this it is plain that in his new-creating and renovating power, the Holy Ghost was then given, and if those on whom this is bestowed, are not born anew, we have yet to hear what the new birth is—yea, the writer of the tract must change his own definition, as we will show presently.

The view of the church on this point may be gathered from the first Homily on Whitsunday. After alluding to the operations of the Holy Ghost on David and Matthew, and Peter and Paul, it is written—"Such is the power of the Holy Ghost to *regenerate* men, and to bring them forth anew, so that they shall be nothing like the men they were before." Certainly in the view of the Homily, David and Matthew, and Peter, before, and Paul after, Pentecost, were regenerated. Then what assurance it must require to affirm, as the writer of the tract does, "truly Catholic Christians have in all ages felt that the Christian church enjoys a gift of the Spirit, that was unknown to the ages and generations before—and the first entrance on that gift they have ever identified with the regeneration on which our Lord insists," p. 4. We can account for this language only on the supposition that in the opinion of this writer, the author of the Homily and those who hold with him on this point are not "Catholic Christians"—an arrogant assumption in which the writers of this school often freely indulge.*

rebuke ministered to Nicodemus was inappropriate and undeserved. Most persons, we presume, will conclude, that Jesus "spake that which he knew," and will rather incline to the opinion, that the writer of the tract is fairly liable to the censure passed on the ignorant Pharisee.

* Can the writer of the tract have seen the last "Pastoral Letter to the Clergy, and members, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the United States of America?" If he has, he deserves to be rebuked, for the unceremonious manner in which he excludes from the pale of Catholic Christianity, not only the house of Bishops, from whom the pastoral letter proceeded, but also the house of clerical and lay deputies, whose sanction it received. We beg leave to annex an extract from that letter, which will be found page after page, in direct antagonism to the unscriptural dogma of the tract.

After quoting Gal. iii. 8, "The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham"—the letter proceeds—"The covenant" made with Abraham, called here "*the gospel*"—was *a covenant of grace*, mercy, and truth, through faith in Jesus Christ, whose day

We give another passage from the same Homily: "Here is now the glass in which thou must behold thyself, and discern whether thou *have the Holy Ghost* within thee, or the spirit of the flesh. If those see that thy works be virtuous and good, consonant to the prescript rule of God's word, savouring and tasting not of the flesh, but of the Spirit, then assure thyself that thou art *endued* with the Holy Ghost." Will the writer of the tract undertake to say that holy men of old, of whom the world was not worthy, did not bear these marks of "being endued with the Holy Ghost"—of "having the Holy Ghost within them?"

We now come to the writer's own description of the person who has received the peculiar gift of the Holy Ghost. His language on this point has been more than once recited—it runs thus: "He has now a spiritual constitution with spiritual faculties—faculties which he could never have inherited by his first birth, and whereby he can apprehend heavenly truth, and discern, obey, and love, the spiritual law."

Will the writer pretend that before the day of Pentecost no one ever did, or could "so apprehend heavenly truth, and discern, obey, and love, the spiritual law?" Not, we presume, with the psalms of David in his hand. Will he then say that David, and those of like character and experience, did all these things without the constitution and faculties necessary to their performance? This would be both unphilosophical and unscriptural. Then those persons had the spiritual constitution and its spiritual faculties, &c.; and as this is, in the writer's view, the new birth, they must have been born of the Spirit. And how does he attempt to extricate himself from this inconsistency? By granting that the righteous of old were "renewed unto holiness; and renewed, as alone they could be, by the

Abraham saw and rejoiced. It remained in the apostles' day, the same as in the days of Abraham, and it remains the same now as then. It was and is a Gospel Covenant of unbounded love and free grace, through the atonement of the Son of God. *The only difference* between Abraham and ourselves, is in that *he* looked forward, and *we*, in point of time, look backward. *He* to the Saviour then afar off to come, and *we* to the same Saviour who *hath* come, now eighteen hundred years and more, to suffer *once for all* upon the cross for the sons of men. *He* in the dawn—*we* in the evening of the day of grace." But those who hold such sentiments do not, in the opinion of the writer of the tract, belong to the number of "truly Catholic Christians"—"they have always *felt*" otherwise on this subject. Who but must admire the modesty of the writer, and the consideration of the society, by which his saying has been sent forth with their endorsement! But no doubt "they are the people, and wisdom shall die with them."

Spirit of holiness," p. 7; and yet asserting that "the Spirit, though operating on them, had never been given to them." A very remarkable distinction, which I do not feel called on to explain and vindicate—much less to excuse the irreverent way in which he disposes of the difficulty, when he adds, that those "workings" of the Spirit "were but stray visitations." *Stray visitations* of the *Holy Ghost!* What a daring assertion! The Son of God had somehow *missed his way*—wandered—and unintentionally passed among and operated on those ancient people! But enough; enough to shock and sicken even the neological spirit of Neander. He convicts the apostles of error: the writer of the tract discovers that the Spirit of God has *strayed!*

There is yet another difficulty to be disposed of. If, as the tract teaches, "the fallen root was not taken away—the spiritual man, not yet revealed—the spiritual constitution not yet provided," then what has become of the worthies of the former dispensation? Our writer anticipates some such inquiry, and tries to provide for it by saying—"I do not deny, that in the other world, saints of the olden covenant are, in some way unknown to us, ingrafted on the fulness of Christ's body, and made partakers of all those privileges which he died to purchase," p. 7. Connexion with the church *in this world*, he does deny them, and maintains that in the other world, by some unrevealed process the connexion is formed. We have been led to think of the church of God as *one* from the beginning, though at different periods, under different dispensations. We have supposed that there never has been but *one root and stock* of the church, and that into this, the saints under the old, as well as those under the new dispensation were all *grafted*. Such was evidently the view of St. Paul, Romans, xi. 23: "For if thou (a Gentile Christian,) wert cut out of the olive tree, which is wild by nature, and wert grafted, contrary to nature, into a good olive tree; how much more shall these, (Jews,) which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?" "God is able to graff them in again." *Again*—so once, and to be so *again*. The stock always one and the same. But no! our writer affirms that no such ingraftment took place in this world. According to his system, there was as yet nothing provided on which they could be ingrafted—no human nature of our Lord—no spiritual man revealed. If then they died strangers to a vital union with our Lord, and without the spiritual constitution, what, we still inquire, has become of them? To say they could enter upon heaven, without a new birth unto

righteousness, would be in the very face of scripture. The writer slurs it over, by asserting that in some way "unknown to us, they are, in the above world, ingrafted on the fulness of Christ." The process is in another world—he does not say *where*—and is *unknown* to us—as *yet*, we suppose—that is, it is among the things reserved for future development. We dare, however, opine what it will soon be discovered and announced to be. We Protestants shall, in due season, hear of the Limbus Patrum—the superior part, the upper outskirts of the infernal regions, where those to be saved were detained until their debts were actually paid by Christ, and he went in person to perfect what was lacking in them, and to effect their discharge. We are not yet prepared for the re-introduction of this procedure. It is therefore kept back among "the unknown"—the reserved. But as it is part and parcel of the theory of the tract, it must and will, when "the times" permit, come in in connexion with the system to which it belongs.

The writer expresses the hope that he shall "sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God." May the hope be fully realized! If his pernicious doctrine prevails, we firmly believe that its tendency and effect will be to lead others into a delusion, which will prevent their ever attaining the same blessed privilege. We have, therefore, regarded it as a duty to expose the unsoundness of such teaching, and to endeavour to counteract its unhappy influence.

That a society professing to set forth the doctrines of the Protestant Episcopal Church, would have issued a tract abounding in errors of so serious a character, was not to have been expected, and ought not to be tolerated. It contains the very tap root of Popery, which, unless completely sundered and extirpated, must soon fill the garden of the Lord with the worst weeds of that Anti-Christian system.

